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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/391,069	09/07/1999	ELIZABETH F. CHURCHILL	FXPL-01000US	8020

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EXAMINER

NAJJAR, SALEH

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2154

DATE MAILED: 09/06/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/391,069

Applicant(s)

CHURCHILL ET AL.

Examiner

Saleh Najjar

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 September 1999.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-47 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-47 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 2/83
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 1-2
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

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1. This action is responsive to the application filed on September 7, 1999. Claims 1-47 are presented for examination. Claims 1-47 represent an apparatus and method for anchored conversations adhesive in content supporting virtual discussion forums.

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -
(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) do not apply to the examination of this application as the application being examined was not (1) filed on or after November 29, 2000, or (2) voluntarily published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b). Therefore, this application is examined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CAR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

3. Claims 1-47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by England, U.S. Patent No. 6,144,991.

England teaches the invention as claimed including a system and method for managing interactions between users in a browser-based telecommunications network (see abstract)..

As to claim 1, England teaches system for placing and maintaining anchored conversations, comprising:

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a conversation coordinator (guide/director application) configured to anchor at least one conversation client (chat box) to one of an application (browser web page) and an artifact (web resources) of said application (see figs. 1-5; col. 10-12; col. 15-16, England discloses a guide program which can load frame sets or layouts and then load Internet resources, web pages or collaborative tools into individual frames that are displayed to a client, such collaborative tools include a chat program, shared white board, shared pointer, distributed pasteboard, and video conferencing).

As to claim 2, England teaches the system according to claim 1, wherein said conversation coordinator and said conversation client are separate applications linked together by communications such that said conversation coordinator directs initiation and positioning of said conversation client (see figs. 1-5; col. 10-12, England discloses a guide program which can load frame sets or layouts and then load Internet resources, web pages or collaborative tools into individual frames that are displayed to a client, such collaborative tools include a chat program, shared white board, shared pointer, distributed pasteboard, and video conferencing).

As to claim 3, England teaches the system according to claim 1, wherein said communications made by said conversation client are persistent and accessible via said conversation coordinator (see fig. 9; col. 12, England teaches that communication between client application and guide program are persistent and retrievable by the guide through the chat box).

As to claim 4, England teaches the system according to claim 1, further comprising:

a database configured to store conversations engaged in by said conversation client; wherein said conversation coordinator is further configured to allow a user access to any current or previous conversations stored in said database (see col. 14; col. 20, England discloses that a session can be recorded by the director application to a file and played back later through a user request).

As to claim 5, England teaches the system according to claim 1, wherein: said conversation coordinator comprises, a request handler configured to receive

conversation requests from a requesting conversation client, and a client mechanism configured to initiate a recipient conversation client having an anchor position, application, and artifact equivalent to the application, artifact, and anchor position of the requesting conversation client (see figs. 1-11; col. 11-20, England teaches that the director application receives a request for a join or new session from a client and coordinates the rendering of the web page frames including the collaborative tools and a chat box anchored at a position within the web page frame layout).

As to claim 6, England teaches the system according to claim 5, wherein said request handler includes an approval mechanism that identifies whether an intended recipient of the conversation request approves entering into an anchored conversation (see col. 16, lines 40-60).

As to claim 7, England teaches the system according to claim 6, wherein said approval mechanism includes an id device that identifies all participants of a conversation to the intended recipient (see col. 20, lines 1-20).

As to claim 8, England teaches the system according to claim 5, wherein: said client mechanism comprises, a startup mechanism configured to initiate a target application associated with a conversation request received by the request handler (RPC interface); a retrieval mechanism configured to retrieve an artifact associated with the conversation request and load the retrieval artifact into the target application; a connection manager configured to establish a communications link with the requesting conversation client and the recipient conversation client; and an anchor device configured to locate and attach the recipient conversation client to the equivalent anchor position in the retrieved artifact (see col. 20-30, England discloses that the director application includes a remote procedure call interface which allows a way for a program to call a function on another computer or another process on the same computer and which manages the collaborative content introduced into the frame sets according to the request).

As to claim 9, England teaches the system according to claim 8, wherein said anchor device is further configured to track a location of said equivalent anchor position, and position a user interface of the conversation client to within a predetermined

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proximity of the anchor if a position of the anchor is moved (see col. 10-12, England teaches that the guide controls the layout of the frame sets so that a chat box is anchored into a position looks the same as in the guide screen).

As to claim 10, England teaches the system according to claim 8, wherein said anchor device comprises:

an attachment device configured to maintain a position of the conversation client relative to the corresponding anchor; an unattach device configured to disassociate the position of the conversation client from a corresponding anchor; and reattachment device configured to re-attach a detached conversation client to the position of its corresponding anchor (see figs. 1-11; col. 10-13; col. 18, England teaches that the guide program allows attachment and detachment of frame set layouts on a web page).

As to claims 11-14, England teaches the system according to claim 8, further comprising:

a database configured to store communications between conversation clients; and a conversation retrieval mechanism configured to retrieve previous communications from the database that are associated with the requesting conversation client and load the retrieved previous communications into at least the recipient conversation client system wherein said connection manager establishes a connection that connects said database to the initiated conversation client so that said database is a silent participant that logs any conversations participated in by the initiated conversation client into said database, a database mechanism configured to store conversation information of the conversation client in a database wherein said conversation information includes a history of at least one of a location in the artifact of an anchor corresponding to the conversation client, and communications between the conversation client and another client (see col. 14; col. 20, England discloses that a session can be recorded by the director application to a file and played back later through a user request).

As to claims 15-16, England teaches the system according to claim 1, further comprising:

an API mechanism configured to initiate at least one target application and load an artifact into the target application; and an anchor device configured to anchor a conversation client to one of the artifact and an anchor of the artifact, wherein said API mechanism includes at least one application control device configured to direct operations of at least one target application via a target application programming interface.(see col. 20, lines 1-20, England discloses a remote procedure call interface (RPC) for calling functions used to load web resources and collaborative tools to be displayed in the frame set layouts).

As to claim 17, England teaches the system according to claim 5, wherein said conversation coordinator further comprises a synchronization device configured to notify a user of the recipient conversation client if the artifact associated with the recipient conversation client becomes out of sync with a master document (see col. 26).

As to claim 18, England teaches the system according to claim 17, wherein said synchronization device includes an activatable input mechanism by which a user may activate a synchronization process to update the out of synch artifact (see col. 26, lines 45-65, England discloses that navigation commands are used at the client to update content of frame sets).

As to claims 19-20, England teaches the system according to claim 17, wherein said conversation coordinator further comprises an update mechanism configured to update the artifact based on changes to the master document wherein said master document is the artifact of the requesting conversation client.(see col. 26-27).

As to claim 21, England teaches the system according to claim 5, wherein said conversation coordinator further comprises an anchor identification mechanism configured to identify other anchored conversations in the artifact of the recipient conversation client and one of highlight, grey, and make invisible each identified anchor based on a predetermined access/privacy setting (see figs. 8-11; col. 11-16).

As to claim 22, England teaches the system according to claim 1, wherein said conversation coordinator comprises:

a client mechanism configured to initiate a conversation client; and an anchor device configured to position the conversation client relative to one of said application

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and an anchor of said artifact (see col. 11-16).

As to claim 23, England teaches the system according to claim 1, wherein said conversation coordinator further comprises a messaging device configured to receive messages from said application (see col. 10-13).

As to claim 24, England teaches the system according to claim 23, wherein said messages include at least one of an anchor position, invocation of an anchored conversation, and adding an anchor (see figs. 1-13; col. 10-13).

As to claim 25, England teaches the system according to claim 1, wherein said conversation coordinator includes a communications device configured to route communications, from the conversation client to a communications network, and from the communications network to the conversation client (see figs. 1-13; col. 10-13).

As to claim 26, England teaches the system according to claim 25, wherein said communications device is an IRC client configured to pass and retrieve communication to an IRC network (see col. 13, lines 50-55).

As to claim 27, England teaches the system according to claim 1, wherein: said conversation coordinator includes a database mechanism configured to connect a remote database as a silent participant to the conversation client (see col. 14; col. 20, England discloses that a session can be recorded by the director application to a file and played back later through a user request).

Claim 28 does not teach or define any new limitations above claims 1-27 and therefore is rejected for similar reasons.

As to claims 29-30, England teaches the device according to claim 28, wherein: said anchor comprises an ActiveX component inside an in-line shape; and said action device includes a set of routines each associated with at least one corresponding of said user actions and initiated by said ActiveX component wherein said routines are macros defined within said application.(see co. 30).

As to claims 31-32, England teaches the device according to claim 28, wherein said actions comprise at least one of adding an anchor, moving an anchor, deleting an anchor, and activating an anchor, wherein said action device includes an application conversation interface comprising a set of application programming interface extensions

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configured to communicate said user actions to a conversation coordinator configured to respond to implement said user actions (see col. 10-16).

Claims 33-47 do not teach or define any new limitations above claims 1-32 and therefore are rejected for similar reasons.

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Collaborative object architecture by Curtis et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,338,086 B1.
- Personal conferencing system by Coyler et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,151,621.
- Collaborative software system by Gutfreund et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,192,394.
- Collaborative computer system using pseudo server process by Berkowitz et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,392,400.
- managing shared documents by Chisaka, U.S. Patent No. 5,623,655.
- Remote control application sharing by Boss et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,329,984.
- Using shared data to automatically communicate conference status information by Deleeuw, U.S. Patent No. 6,173,315.
- Server side chat monitor by Cottrille et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,076,100.
- Remote collaboration system with multiple host computers using multiple applications by Pommier et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,047,314.
- Method and system for presentation conferencing by Tafoya et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,411,988.

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Saleh Najjar whose telephone number is (703) 308-7613. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 6:30 to 3:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, AN MENG AI, can be reached on (703) 305-9678. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 308-9052.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is

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(703) 305-9600. The fax number for the After-Final correspondence/amendment is (703) 746-7238. The fax number for official correspondence/amendment is (703) 746-7239. The fax number for Non-official draft correspondence/amendment is (703) 746-7240.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Saleh Najjar', written in a cursive style.

Saleh Najjar

Primary Examiner / Art Unit 2154